



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

MAINSTREAMING PIDA IN STRATEGIC
INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIPS

A Common African Position

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1 Introduction

This document presents a common African strategy for partnerships to develop the continent's regional infrastructure. It also provides a framework to assess the impact of these partnerships. The notion of partnerships expresses an ideological aspiration of international solidarity in the development cause and implies mutual support for mutual benefit. In this context, African countries and organisations are cooperating among themselves and with countries and organisations from other regions of the world to develop the continent's regional infrastructure networks. These partnerships are voluntary arrangements that are envisaged to combine and leverage the financial and non-financial resources of partners in support of the continent's infrastructure development. Africa enters into these partnerships for several reasons including the desire to advocate for the implementation of its projects, exchange information and undertake joint research with partners, build the continent's capacity in infrastructure development, and to have a platform for consultation and coordination with development partners. Such partnerships for infrastructure development are in line with Agenda 2063 Aspiration 7 of "An Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner."

The cooperation between Africa and its development partners is generally driven by a desire to achieve the shared goal of developing the continent's infrastructure with the expectation of a net benefit for each party involved. For Africa, a partnership is partly driven by economic considerations and viewed as a vehicle for accessing additional resources, specialised skills and funding. It also allows stakeholders with a vested interest to participate in the management of the continent's infrastructure, underscoring its importance as a tool for multidimensional/ sectoral programmes and projects. Overall, partnerships provide a framework for more inclusive governance (Laing et al. 2009). Another benefit of partnerships is that they could improve the efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the expected outcomes of programmes and projects by minimising duplication of efforts and reducing transaction costs. This benefit enables outcomes to be delivered on time over a larger area and longer time frame.

Africa seeks to avoid the shortcomings of its engagements with development partners, notably the effects of asymmetries in material and symbolic power. In this regard, it desires to have equality in these partnerships, where the same status is accorded to the views and knowledge of all parties. Africa also seeks to eliminate "conditionalities" – attempts to use partnerships as an incentive for countries on the continent to reform their policies and institutions – associated with cooperation with some of its partners (Zimelis, 2011). To become an influential player in global affairs, Africa recognises that reforms are necessary in some cases, but should be driven by African Member States not by development partners in the guise of cooperation.

The overarching perspective of this document is partnerships with non-African countries and organisations to support the development of regional infrastructure on the continent. This perspective encompasses partnerships for the implementation of continental and regional projects as well as national projects with regional impact – supranational projects. It includes partnerships between African countries and their development partners in the context of continental initiatives, such as Agenda 2063 and the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) as well as African Union (AU) partnerships at the multilateral level. The document places PIDA at the heart of Africa's infrastructure partnerships. In essence, African countries and organisations would seek to leverage all partnerships with non-African countries and organisations that have infrastructure components to foster the implementation of PIDA projects. PIDA would be the building block for the continent's engagement in regional infrastructure partnerships.

Section 2 presents the background to Africa’s regional infrastructure development, the mandate to develop a common strategy for cooperating with partners to improve the continent’s infrastructure network and the context in which the mandate was provided. Section 3 explores Africa’s vision for its infrastructure sector and outlines the continent’s development principles that apply to regional infrastructure development. Section 4 discusses the challenges to develop a common position for strategic infrastructure partnerships and approaches to overcome these challenges. Section 5 examines the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on Africa’s infrastructure development with a focus on the role of development partners in addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic and harnessing the opportunities that it presents. Section 6 presents an accountability framework for assessing the benefits of cooperation in infrastructure development. Section 7 recommends actions to operationalise the principles presented in Section 3 and for the effective implementation of the accountability framework. Section 8 concludes the document.

2 Background

Infrastructure – transport, energy, ICT and water – is a component of most collaborative arrangements between Africa and its development partners. These collaborative platforms are being created for a variety of reasons, to strengthen connectivity within Africa as well as between the continent and other regions of the world. Sustainable connectivity – from an economic, environmental, social and financial perspective - is often highlighted as the concept underpinning collaboration between Africa and its partners on infrastructure development. These partnerships are driven by the desire not only for secure and efficient intercontinental networks of land, sea and air passages but also for sustainable, credible and viable investments that create jobs in the concerned countries. Strong partnerships are necessary to create sustainable social change, which is critical in the context of Africa.

Collaboration between Africa and its development partners in the infrastructure sector is intended to be on equal footing and mutually beneficial. It is also supposed to be anchored in a multitude of other principles and concepts including mutual respect, fairness, justice, win-win cooperation, extensive consultation, joint contribution, respect of market principles and international norms, openness and transparency. These partnerships also emphasise the importance of developing inclusive, accessible and reasonably priced infrastructure that is consistent with national conditions and laws and regulations of concerned countries; and the promotion of high-quality and sustainable development for all.

The objectives, drivers and principles of collaboration between Africa and its development partners appear to be well attuned to those of the continent’s development agenda in general and its infrastructure development strategy in particular. For instance, African leaders committed in Agenda 2063 – the African Union’s (AU) blueprint for the continent’s socioeconomic transformation within 50 years – to speed up action to connect the continent through world-class infrastructure. The construction of a high-speed rail network on the continent, the Inga Dam in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Single African Air Transport Market are among the flagship projects of Agenda 2063. The objectives, drivers and principles of the partnerships are also consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 9 on resilient infrastructure.

The question, therefore, is not whether cooperation between Africa and its development partners could be beneficial to the continent’s infrastructure development but how the principles guiding this cooperation are applied to optimise Africa’s benefits. The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) is the framework for developing regional infrastructure on the continent. Therefore, cooperation with

development partners should be assessed by the extent to which they contribute to the implementation of PIDA projects.

2.1 Mandate

The mandate to develop a common African strategy for engaging with partners on infrastructure development stems from the First PIDA Policy Dialogue on facilitating the implementation of the programme organised by the AUC in December 2018. Participants of the dialogue brainstormed on the merits of developing the common strategy and recommended as follows in their final communique:

- i. ECA and the AUC should develop the Common African Strategy for mainstreaming PIDA in infrastructure partnerships with non-African countries and organisations; and
- ii. The strategy should be taken into account in the development of the second phase of PIDA (PIDA PAP 2).

The Second Ordinary Session of the AU Specialised Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET), held in Cairo in April 2018, also recommended that “all stakeholders should use PIDA as a strategic framework while engaging with African and non-African partners”.

Furthermore, the Communique of the PIDA Week held in Cairo in November 2019 urged ECA and the AUC to finalise the Common African Strategy. It is worth noting that the idea of the strategy was discussed in several other continental platforms for policy dialogue on infrastructure development, including:

- The stakeholders’ meeting on strategic infrastructure partnerships held on 5-6 August 2019 in Pretoria, South Africa;
- The stakeholders’ meeting on PIDA PAP 2 processes held on 10-11 August 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda; and
- The Second PIDA Policy Dialogue held on 24-26 August 2019 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

2.2 Context

Lack of finance remains a significant challenge in the implementation of Africa’s infrastructure projects in general, and regional ones in particular. According to the African Development Bank (Africa Outlook 2018), the continent’s infrastructure funding needs have reached US\$170 billion a year, leaving an annual gap estimated at US\$108 billion. In the energy sector alone, an estimated US\$90 billion of investment per year is required to meet energy access targets. Investment in infrastructure is crucial in supporting and sustaining economic growth in Africa. The public sector has traditionally dominated the construction and operation of infrastructure facilities on the continent. However, the governments of most African countries experience enormous financial challenges in providing critical infrastructure to their citizens. It is now generally acknowledged that government and public funding while critically important, would not be enough to bridge the continent’s financing gap.

Building partnerships have, therefore, emerged as a critical strategy to implement Africa’s infrastructure programmes. There are two broad categories of partnerships in Africa’s regional infrastructure development, namely: partnerships among Africa’s regional, sub-regional organisations and countries (internal partnerships); and partnerships between African countries and organisations on the one hand and development partners on the other (external partnerships).

Africa's partners have defined principles and strategies that shape their engagement with the continent on its regional infrastructure development. Africa has agreed to these principles and strategies through joint declarations or action plans with these partners. However, several questions need to be addressed: How can Africa hold its partners accountable for the principles that they have articulated? How can these principles be implemented in practice to ensure that Africa derives maximum benefits from them? What are Africa's principles and strategies for engaging with partners on its regional infrastructure development? This document seeks to answer the above questions. Its rationale is to guide how to optimise Africa's benefits from external partnerships such as those with EU, China in the context of BRI and FOCAC, and Japan in the framework of TICAD, among others.

There are several reasons why Africa needs a common strategy to engage with its partners on the continent's regional infrastructure development, including:

- Lack of a framework (with guiding principles/detailed guidelines) to engage with partners on infrastructure development;
- Partnership frameworks exist between the AU and the United Nations in peace and security, as well as initiatives such as Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Need for Africa to be proactive in initiatives on its infrastructure development, particularly trans-continental initiatives, instead of its development partners consistently taking the lead;
- A common African strategy would provide a sense of direction and help avoid distractions from Africa's priorities;
- Competition among Africa's partners for a share of the continent's infrastructure space, perceived to offer substantial investment opportunities, is gearing up;
- Changing the narrative: Africa needs a strategy that stresses the investment perspective of its infrastructure development rather than approaching it solely from a development aid viewpoint; and
- Efforts have been made in the past to develop a partnership strategy for the AU. It is essential for sectoral strategies, including a partnership strategy for the infrastructure sector, to be anchored in the overall AU partnership strategy.
- The Executive Council, through Decision No.: EX.CL/Dec. 1073(XXXVI), paragraph 82, taken during its Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session held on 6-7 February 2020, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, requested, the PRC, in close collaboration with the Commission, to develop a Partnership Strategy and Policy Framework document to be considered by the 38th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in February 2021. The development of the African Union Partnership Strategy and Policy Framework would assist AU in providing guidelines to strengthen its capacity in partnership initiation, development, coordination and management to work towards achieving AU Agenda 2063, and in particular, Aspiration 7: An Africa as a Strong, United, Resilient and Influential Global Player and Partner.
- The AU Commission, in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD, is working on developing the Strategy and Policy Framework document. The strategy would assist in focusing partnerships towards achieving Africa's priority development goals as enshrined in the AU Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan, define partnership programmes, action plans and other resolutions agreed with partners in a win-win spirit based on the principles of equality, mutual respect, accountability, ownership, efficiency, consistency, value addition and comparative advantage. It would also optimise partnerships value addition through more complementarity across AU structures, areas of partnership and throughout the partnership life cycle.

- Therefore, this Common African Strategy for Partnerships would complement the overall Partnership Strategy and Policy Framework being developed as a partnerships guide book for the AU.

3 Vision and principles

3.1 Vision

Africa has an ambitious vision for its infrastructure development whose achievement requires countries and organisation on the continent to be diligent and steadfast in its pursuit. The Agenda 2063 and PIDA eloquently articulate the continent’s vision for regional infrastructure development. At the global level, African countries are committed to the SDGs that also address infrastructure development issues.

The aspiration in Agenda 2063 of “An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa’s renaissance” addresses infrastructure development directly. In this regard, Africa aspires to have world-class, integrative infrastructure that criss-crosses the continent by 2063. This infrastructure is envisaged to support Africa’s accelerated integration and growth, technology transformation, trade and development. Included are included high-speed railway networks, roads, sea and air transport, as well as well-developed ICT and the digital economy.

This vision is also in line with the African Development Bank’s High 5s for transforming Africa, which are:

1. Light up and power Africa
2. Feed Africa
3. Industrialise Africa
4. Integrate Africa
5. Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa

Africa’s vision for the energy, transport, water and ICT sub-sectors are captured in PIDA as illustrated in Box 1.

Box 1: PIDA Infrastructure Vision

Energy: to develop efficient, reliable, cost-effective and environmentally friendly infrastructure for the physical integration of the continent and enhance access to modern services for the majority of the African population by:

- Developing regional and continental clean power generation and transmission projects;
- Implementing high-capacity oil refineries and oil and gas pipeline projects; and
- Developing renewable energy resources

Transport: to work towards an integrated continent where transport infrastructure and services enable the free movement of goods and passengers by:

- Improving the connectedness of African capitals and significant centres with modern paved roads and modern rail systems;
- Satisfying demand of the African Regional Transport Infrastructure Network (ARTIN) routes at the least economic cost, with priority for landlocked countries, while minimising the environmental impact of transport infrastructure and services; and
- Developing modern ARTIN corridors, including gateway ports and air transport services, to bring the performance of ARTIN components up to best world practice in efficiency, cost, reliability and safety.

Water: to promote integrated water resources management to develop transboundary water infrastructure projects, strengthen transboundary management frameworks for regional integration and ensure water security for the socioeconomic development of Africa by:

- Strengthening institutions for efficient cooperation on shared water resources;
- Developing transboundary water infrastructure to meet increasing water demands while protecting people and the environment;
- Strengthening finances for transboundary water development and management; and
- Improving knowledge of transboundary water basins and shared aquifers.

ICT: to enable Africa to build an information society and an integrated digital economy in which every government, business and citizen has access to reliable and affordable ICT networks by:

- Doubling ICT's contribution to GDP from 5% to 10% by 2025;
- Satisfying African broadband demand at the list cost, while increasing accessibility and security of access;
- Promoting intra-African e-commerce; and
- Increasing physical integration at the regional and continental levels.

At the global level, African countries are committed to the 2030 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *SDG 9 is to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.* Target 9.1. is to develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human wellbeing, with a focus on affordable and equitable access to all. Two indicators of this goal are particularly relevant to infrastructure development, namely: Indicator 9.1.1. *The proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road;* and Indicator 9.a.1 *Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure.*

3.2 Principles

The AU and NEPAD principles should guide Africa's strategic partnerships on infrastructure development. South-South cooperation principles, as well as those of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, should also guide these partnerships. The AU's principles are outlined in its Constitutive Act, and those relevant to strategic infrastructure partnerships include sovereign equality and independence among Member State of the Union; respect for borders existing on achievement of independence; participation of the African people in the activities of the Union; non-interference by the Member States in the affairs of another; promotion of self-reliance within the framework of the Union; promotion of gender equality; and promotion of social justice to ensure balanced economic development.

The principles guiding the implementation of NEPAD include the following:

- a) Good governance, as an essential requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socioeconomic development;
- b) African ownership and leadership, as well as broad and deep participation by all sectors of society;
- c) Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people;
- d) The partnership between and amongst African people;
- e) Acceleration of regional and continental integration;
- f) Building the competitiveness of African countries as a whole;
- g) Forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world; and